

**Architectural and historical impact assessment for the house and  
associated outbuildings known as Kingthorpe, Umlaas Road district,  
KwaZulu-Natal**



**Prepared for: Mr Neville Hattingh  
Blue Environmental Consultants**

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**archaic consulting**

**architecture: research: conservation: anthropology: impacts consulting**

**debbie whelan  
po box 21834  
mayors walk  
3208**

**tel: 033 3442522  
fax: 033 3443122  
cell: 083236 0410  
email: [debbie@archaic.co.za](mailto:debbie@archaic.co.za)**

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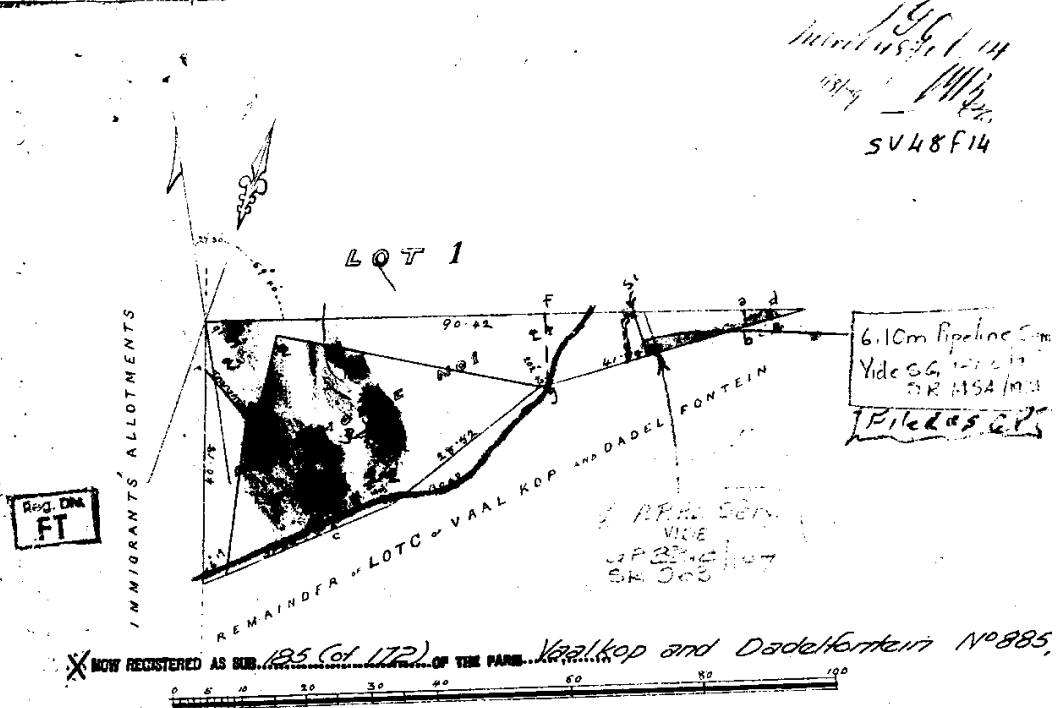
The farm name 'Kingthorpe' first appears on the survey of July 1879 where sub Kingthorpe No 1 of subC of the farm Vaalkop and Dadelfontein no 885 are bounded by immigrants allotments and the remainder of Vaalkop and Dadelfontein. (see attachments). These immigrant allotments appear to have been surveyed as early as 1850, with J Byrne being noted as the owner of a few of them. The first owner of 'Kingthorpe' farm in August 1879 was one Thomas Foster, who purchased the land from a Mr E Smith. Records show that a Mr E Smith, agriculturalist/Clerk arrived in Cape Town on the *Eclipse* on 27/11/1849. (Bull;1991) Another piece of land was purchased by Foster from Smith, namely Sub 1 of C in 1870, which shows that the Kingthorpe property predated the survey diagram attached. In the *Census of the Colony of Natal in 1881*, the portion of land known as Sub 6, Kingthorpe, 1 of C land is shown as being occupied by Thomas Foster, farmer, and that there was no building improvement on the land.(NAB 3/1/1/32)

Foster sold the land to a Frederick Harrison in 1896, who owned the land, with WB Turner as tenant, until September 1918 when it was sold to Arthur Fuller, and transferred into Quinton Fuller's name in 1969 (the Land Registers also note that Mr Fuller was born in 1929).

In 1905, WB Turner was active in the local farmers associations, and submitted a petition to the Colonial Public Works Department for the provision of a road, 4 miles long, from the main road through the farms which formed part of the original 'immigrants allotments'. At this stage the road reached for some 1 1/2 miles.(MJPW;122:2736/1905) On the attached map, F Harrison is noted as the owner and W Turner as the tenant. F Harrison also appears to own the prime property along Main Road no 1. Certainly, WB Turner, an early resident, appears to have living on the property for many years, as he is noted in archival material from at least 1906, and was a tenant when the Fuller's purchased the property in 1918.

More legendary in the history of the farm is its (notoriety) as a hippy colony- Mrs Fuller says that the stories that they could tell could fill a book! Apparently the hippy colony started off as tenants who were University lecturers, whose alternative lifestyles mutated resulting in the hippies as tenants.

1879  
 1879  
 5V48F14



Now known as: SCALE of CHAINS  
 Sub Knightrope No 1 of Sub C of the farm Vaalkop and Dadelfontein No 885  
 The above Sub Knightrope marked Knightrope No 1 rep- 4/40

resents 163 acres 1 rood 2 perches of Land, situate and being a portion of the Remainder of Lot C of the Farms "Vaalkop" and "Dadelfontein", in the County of Pietermaritzburg, Colony of Natal. Bounded N. by Lot 1, S.E. by Remainder of Lot C of Vaalkop and Dadelfontein, and W. by Immigrants' Allotments. SR 9606

July 1879

Surveyed by me  
 Thomas Fleming  
 Government Surveyor

FOR ENDORSEMENTS, ETC., SEE BACK

Fig. 948  
 FT, 5D, 15D  
 COMP FT6G  
 COMP FT5ED FTSH  
 COMP FT5DB

## History of the property:

This information was gleaned from an interview with Mr Fuller, who has lived on the farm Kingthorpe since his birth in 1929 until very recently. He and his family moved to Pietermaritzburg two years ago, having sold the land to developers, even though it was under 'Land Claim'.

Quinton Fuller's father, AW Fuller bought the farm Kingthorpe in 1918. He paid £7 7/-6 per acre for the land, some 1200 acres in total. This was apparently named after a hamlet in the midlands of England. The house and the farm had been there for a long time, as, when Mr Fuller was about 8 in 1927, a Mr Foster came to visit. He was in his eighties, and said that he had grown up on the farm as a young boy and had lived in the house. This makes the age of the house and the farm around 160 years old. The early owners had named the farm Kingthorpe.

The archival records note that a Mr WB Turner lived on the farm. Mr Fuller has corroborated this, saying that Turner was a tenant on the property when they bought the farm. Turner farmed beef.

The property was always a working farm; Mr Fuller said that his father had done beef and dairy, as well as maize, but since the latter was always being plundered, this was curtailed in the pursuit of growing pasturage for baling and selling. Mr Fuller ran beef and dairy, but stopped the dairy after a while.

The property consists of a subdivision of the 'Immigrant Lands', farms Vaalkop and Dadelfontein. The main building is of mud brick, and where it is plastered, lath was applied to the walls by Mr Fuller's father, and the walls were then plastered and painted. The kitchen and bathroom were added on later. Mr Fuller's father also paneled the inside walls. Here, the area below the chair rail was a dark white, above the chair rail up to the picture rail, a cream, and above the picture rail, white. The ceilings, which were boarded, had thatch inside the roof. All the cover strips in the partitioning were covered in black paint. The big fireplace in the lounge formed the kitchen hearth when they moved in- this room was originally two rooms but the partition was removed and the room made into the lounge. The one bedroom acted as the dairy, with access from outside. The corrugated sheeting roof had the logo HLH DNR, Hunt, Leuchars and Hepburn, (Durban)

The acacia in the front of the house (which is no longer there) was recognized by Mr Foster as having been there when he was a boy which makes it incredibly old indeed. The four palm trees were planted by Mr Fuller's father, who had purchased them for 7/-6 a tree, a fact that he bemoaned as being expensive. He also planted the jacarandas.

The main (new) house on the site, not included in this report, was built by Mr Fuller in 1951, and he then got married in 1955. The old house was then let out to a succession of tenants, which the Fuller family wish that they had written a book about. The most colourful in latter years was the 'hippy' colony.

Mr Fuller went to school at Camperdown Primary, and boarded in the village as the 6 1/2 miles was deemed to far to travel daily. They went into town once a fortnight, and it took some 40 minutes to travel to Pietermaritzburg. Until they could afford oxen, they used a span of donkeys that they had got from De Aar. There was no electricity on the farm, so Mr Fuller's father set up a substation and produced 32V electricity for lighting. The water was collected in underground rainwater tanks, and then the borehole was dug, it produced a brackish water which even the cows avoided, preferring to walk a kilometer down to the river. Mr Fuller, senior, and Mr Harries, started the milk and butter factory at Umlaas Road.

A site inspection of the house and outbuildings was made on the 8<sup>th</sup> August 2007, and a second to confirm details which came up in the interview, on the 25<sup>th</sup> August 2007.

The Kingthorpe property is situated on the Lion Park road, with the house and outbuildings being distant and not visible from the road.

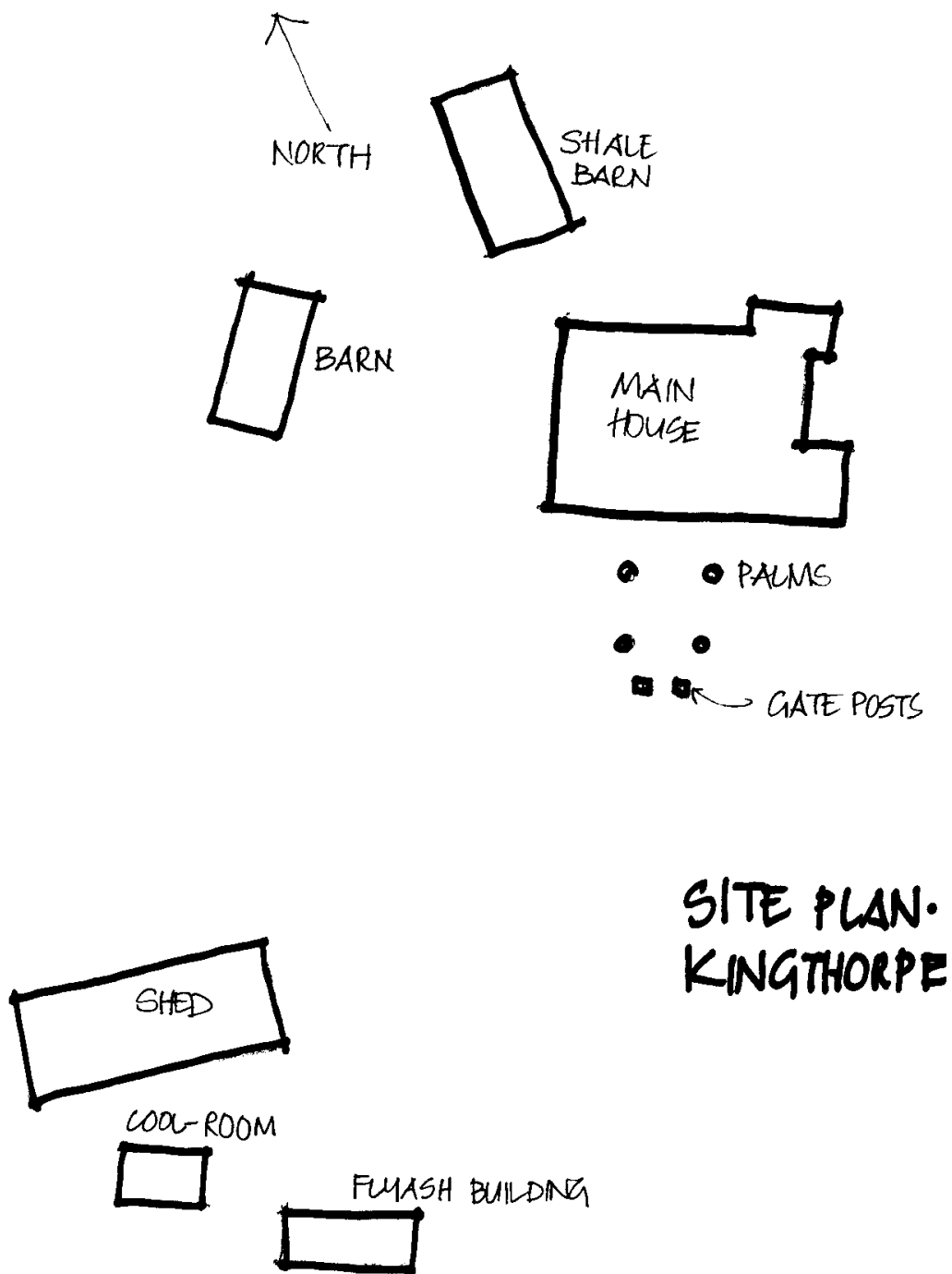


Fig 1: site plan of Kingthorpe Complex

## The Main House:



Fig 2: view of house from south

The Kingthorpe house is red brick, plastered in places (see above) under a shallowly-pitched corrugated sheeting roof. It has a veranda to the north and the east. It is a typical farmhouse that sits in association with a number of other buildings of a more practical nature. There is an uncomfortable addition, also over the age of 60 years, which occupies the north east corner, constructed out of red brick but with a parapet and a mono-pitched roof. The garden is typically and exotically planted, with established palm trees and jacarandas.

The condition of the external part of the house is generally good, with a little more than basic maintenance being needed. Internally, the house is unusual in that all the internal walls are of partition boards, with chair rails and the decorative *accoutrements* of the period. The main living room has a magnificent brick fireplace at the western end. (this was the kitchen in 1918 when the Fuller family moved in). Rather disturbingly, on a second visit on Saturday 25 August, it was found that the rear veranda was in the process of being bricked up in the most alarming manner possible (see Fig 7)

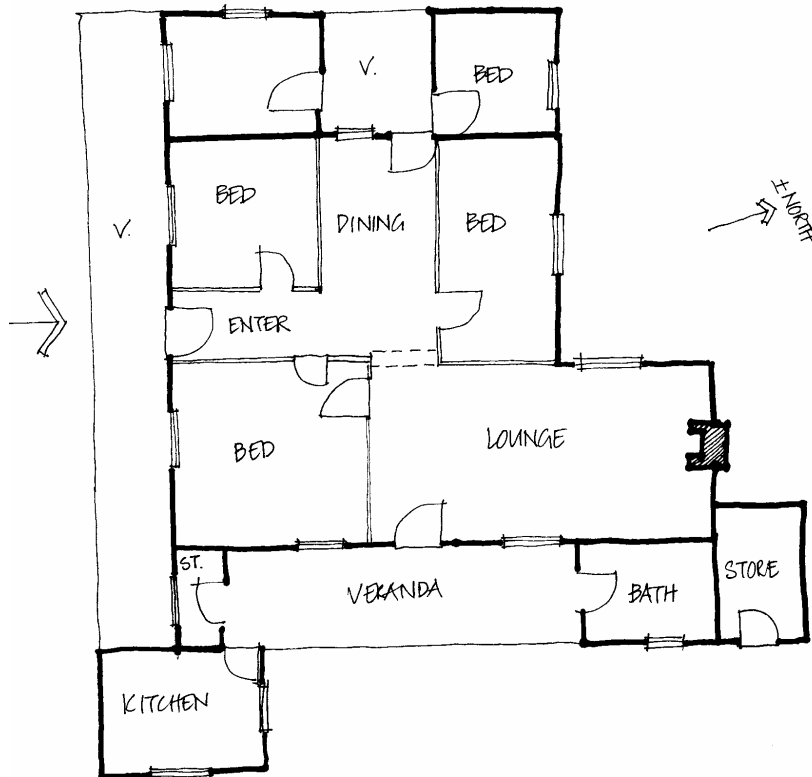


Fig 3: Plan of the main house





Fig 4: view of main veranda to the south



Fig 5: Symmetry of palms and gate posts



Fig 6: Back veranda- first visit



Fig 7: Back veranda- second visit



Fig 8: house from north-east



Fig 9: addition on the north-eastern corner





Fig 10: door from main room to east veranda- note the chair rails in the paneling

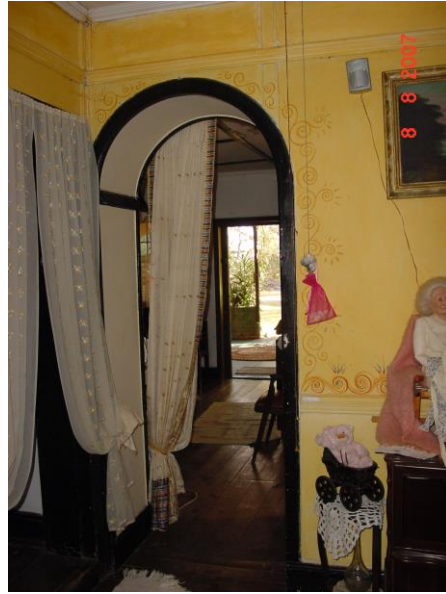


Fig 11: arch from lounge to dining area



Fig 12: Main room showing fireplace



Fig 13: Black painted cover strips as described by Mr Fuller



Fig 14: close up of fireplace





Fig 15: back veranda-entrance to bathroom

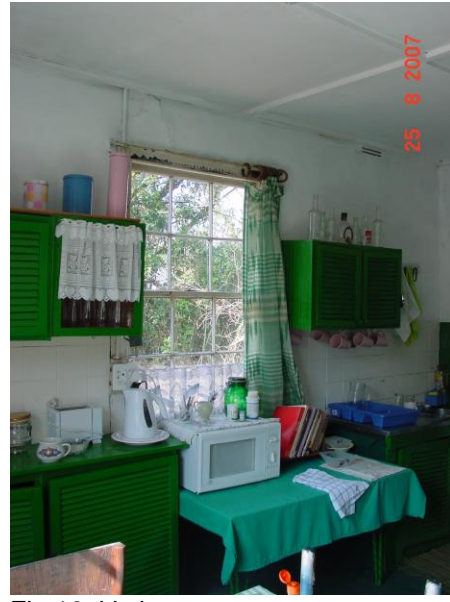


Fig 16: kitchen at rear



Fig 17: showing house from east



Fig 18: underside of east veranda

### Significance of structure

Main house	local	regional	National	international
Architectural significance	high	low	low	low
Technical significance	low	low	low	low
Scientific significance	low	low	low	low
Social significance	high	low	low	low
Historical significance	low	low	low	low

Although the house is a good example of a rural farmhouse, it is distinctive in that it is a structure dating back to the 1880's which is constructed of earth. Although the owner notes that the visit by Mr Foster as a man in his eighties, it is known that the earliest that this Mr Foster could have been on the land as a child is 1870- the property was put into Thomas Foster's name as Kingthorpe in 1879. The Census of the Colony of Natal in 1881 shows no improvement on this particular portion of land, which dates the house to about 1885.

It is protected under the Heritage Act no 10 of 1997, being older than 60 years.

## The Shale Barn



Fig 19: Showing shale barn from the north

This is a ramshackle though nostalgic agricultural building, with three sides of shale wall holding up a corrugated sheeting roof covered in cats-claw creeper. This, according to Mr Fuller, was used as an open barn. It is situated next to the house.

### Significance of Structure:

Shale barn	local	regional	National	international
Architectural significance	low	low	low	low
Technical significance	low	low	low	low
Scientific significance	low	low	low	low
Social significance	low	low	low	low
Historical significance	low	low	low	low

Although this building has nostalgia value, it is not of any significance architecturally, technically, scientifically, socially nor historically. It is protected under the Heritage Act no 10 of 1997, being older than 60 years.



## The Brick barn



Fig 20: showing barn



Fig 21: Barn from the north



Fig 22: Showing joints



Fig 23: barn from the south east

This is a saddle backed shed with a mono-pitch rear addition, which has been painted. The walls are of wire cut bricks and have eroded mortar joints, suggesting mud mortar at the time of construction. This is corroborated by Mr Fuller who says that the cement (probably lime) was pointed on the extreme outside, whilst the inner pointing was of mud. The tenant in this building called this the 'cowshed', but this was disputed by Mr Fuller who says that it was just a barn, and that his father had subdivided the internal spaces to make it habitable.

### Significance of the structure:

Brick barn	local	regional	National	international
Architectural significance	low	low	low	low
Technical significance	low	low	low	low
Scientific significance	low	low	low	low
Social significance	low	low	low	low
Historical significance	low	low	low	low

Although the structure is protected by the provincial Heritage Act, no 10 of 1997, and is a tidy example of a rural structure, it has been much altered and has no value socially, historically, architecturally, technically nor architecturally. However, the wire cut bricks are salvageable in the event of demolition.

## Cool Room and incubator



Fig 24: entrance to cool-room building



Fig 25: group showing fly-ash rammed building on left and cool room behind shed structure.



Fig 26: showing construction of cool-room

The building described is a small structure tucked behind other farm buildings. It consists of mixed material construction and is in a dilapidated state. The edges are brick constructed and the rest is a mixture of shale, cement and plaster. The flagstoned floor inside is collapsing at the rear and the roof has largely disappeared. There is a window which has evidence of wooden louvers which have long ago fallen out.

This building was noted by Mr Fuller as having been a cool-room and an incubator.

### Significance of structure:

Cool room/ incubator	local	regional	National	international
Architectural significance	low	low	low	low
Technical significance	low	low	low	low
Scientific significance	low	low	low	low
Social significance	low	low	low	low
Historical significance	low	low	low	low

It is protected under the Heritage Act no 10 of 1997, being older than 60 years. In some ways I consider this the most interesting building on the site, for its mixed construction.



## Rammed flyash structure



Fig 27: showing building as part of group



Fig 28: Showing building close up

This building was constructed by Mr Fuller for one of the tenants. It is made of rammed fly-ash and concrete and was, according to Mr Fuller, the cheapest building that he had ever built.

### Significance of structure:

<b>Rammed ash structure</b>	local	regional	National	international
Architectural significance	low	low	low	low
Technical significance	low	low	low	low
Scientific significance	low	low	low	low
Social significance	low	low	low	low
Historical significance	low	low	low	low

This building does not fall within the 60 year clause for the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act, and has no social, architectural, technical, historical nor scientific significance. Demolition, should it be requested, would be acceptable.

### Shed:



Fig 29: showing group of buildings



Fig 30: Showing shed

The shed is a large open agricultural space which is constructed of gum-poles and sheeting. It is bordering on rickety.

### Significance of structure:

Shed structure	local	regional	National	international
Architectural significance	low	low	low	low
Technical significance	low	low	low	low
Scientific significance	low	low	low	low
Social significance	low	low	low	low
Historical significance	low	low	low	low

This building does not fall within the 60 year clause for the KwaZulu-Natal Heritage Act, and has no social, architectural, technical, historical nor scientific significance. Demolition, should it be requested, would be acceptable.

### Conclusions:

The following observations should be made with respect to the site:

- The old property is not visible from the road, and is hidden behind the house of 1950's construction. It thus has no street context.
- The close proximity to Pietermaritzburg is beneficial with respect to the reuse of the house, as a farm museum or as a restaurant. The state of repair of the house is good considering its age and recent history, but more work than basic maintenance has to be done.
- The outbuildings form a complex with the house, and are related in their agricultural context. Demolition of the outbuildings and retention of the house means that the function of the house would have to change to a new context.

**Recommendations:** demolition of the outbuildings, should it be necessary, is not seen as problematic in relation to the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Heritage Act no 10 of 1997. Indeed, the building constructed of rammed fly-ash and the big shed are not protected by this Act of Law.

The house has embedded history, and although is not unique, is well situated with respect to the new development as well as to the city of Pietermaritzburg, and its practical reuse in terms of the development or a greater end-user should be investigated.

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- |                                  |  |
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Archival:- from Killie Campbell Collection, Deeds Office and Provincial Archives Repository

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